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BOOK REVIEW

Three Months in the Confederate Army, by Henry Hotze.

With an Introduction and Notes by Richard Barksdale Harwell. 38 pp. Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press. 1952. \$1.00.

The Southern Confederacy's main chance lay in intervention on its behalf by the major European powers. In recognition of this fact, the new government set out to create a climate of favorable opinion in England and France. In November, 1861, Secretary of State Robert Hunter appointed as principal propagandist in London - though he used the disarming title "Commercial Agent" - one Henry Hotze of Mobile, Alabama.

Only twenty-seven years old at the time, the Swiss born Hotze entered vigorously upon his new assignment. Within three weeks of his arrival in London he had placed a leading article in Lord Palmerston's *Morning Post* - and the article was so good that many thought it from Palmerston's own pen. His success thereafter was spectacular.

On his own initiative, and with meager backing, the young journalist soon launched a Confederate paper, the *Index*, the first issue of which appeared in May, 1862. For more than three years the *Index*, with its Confederate sponsorship soft-pedalled, dispensed news stories, feature articles and general information designed to produce a friendly attitude toward the Southern people and their cause. That the Confederacy ultimately was defeated was due to no failure on the part of the *Index* or its youthful editor. His achievement was nothing short of magnificent.

Before receiving the London assignment, Hotze had served three months in the Third Alabama Regiment. During this period he apparently kept a journal. Shortage of copy, and a brilliant inspiration to turn his army experience to propaganda

uses, caused Hotze to publish serially in the *Index* his "Three Months in the Confederate Army."

Recently, Richard Harwell had the happy inspiration of recovering Hotze's war memoirs from the rare and little known files of the *Index* and making them available to general readers. To a facsimile reproduction of the columns containing the narrative he prefixed a worthy introduction, accompanied by notes; he also prepared notes for the text. The idea was an especially good one, and while the technical part of the undertaking fails to measure up to the editorial aspect, the cause of scholarship has been well served by the project.

Since Hotze's military service was limited largely to camp routine, his narrative is hardly a stirring account of soldier life. But as a skillful propaganda piece it is extremely interesting. In the process of recounting his personal military history, the writer was able to get across unobtrusively such persuasive points as the loftiness of Southern patriotism, the eagerness of all classes to serve in the ranks, the high quality of military leadership and the superiority of Confederate soldiers over those of the North. Throughout the account may be discerned subtle suggestion of close similarity between the high-spirited Southerners and their esteemed British cousins.

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